

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL KHORRAMSHAHR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 93

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, IR

SUBJECT: PORT CONDITIONS AT KHORRAMSHAHR AND BANDAR SHAHPUR

REF: KHORRAMSHAHR 37; KHORRAMSHAHR 55

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO COMMERCE

1. ADVENT OF MEHDI KASHANI AS DIRECTOR OF PORTS FOR KHUZISTAN AND KHARG ISLAND HAS BROUGHT NEW LIFE TO KHORRAMSHAHR AND PROGRESS DESCRIBED REFTELS STILL TAKING PLACE. WAITING TIME AT BOTH PORTS CURRENTLY FOUR DAYS.

2. AS A RESULT OF IMPROVED PORT CONDITIONS CONGESTION SURCHARGE AT BOTH PORTS FURTHER REDUCED TO 5 PER CENT AND KASHANI BELIEVES IT PROBABLE THAT SURCHARGE WILL BE REDUCED TO ZERO WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS.

3. IN PAST TWO MONTHS ANNUAL PORT CAPACITY AT KHORRAMSHAHR HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM 1.8 MILLION TONS TO 3.5 MILLION TONS. KASHANI TOLD CONOFF HE EXPECTS CAPACITY TO REACH 4.5 MILLION TONS BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR.

4. WHILE SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK FOR KHORRAMSHAHR IMPROVING
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IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT BANDAR SHAHPUR WILL BE PORT OF THE FUTURE.

KASHANI CONFIDENT 5 NEW, MODERN JETTIES WILL BE BUILT BY END CURRENT FIVE YEAR PLAN, AND AN ADDITIONAL TEN JETTIES MAY BE BUILT THEREAFTER. ACCORDING TO KASHANI AT THAT TIME BANDAR SHAHPUR WILL BE BY FAR LARGEST AND MOST MODERN PORT IN IRAN AND WILL HANDLE ALL FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS. KHORRAMSHAHR WILL BE RESERVED FOR IRANIAN FLAG VESSELS.

5. MASTER PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT ALL PORTS SOUTHERN IRAN NOW BEING PREPARED BY CONSULTING FIRMS OF HARRIS-ADEBI IN TEHRAN UNDER \$3.5 MILLION CONTRACT. KASHANI CONFIRMED NEWSPAPER REPORTS THAT \$500 MILLION WILL BE ALLOCATED FOR PORT DEVELOPMENT DURING NEXT FIFTEEN YEARS. HE ALSO CONFIRMED THAT A NEW PERSIAN GULF PORT MAY BE CONSTRUCTED PROBABLY IN EASTERN PART OF GULF.

COMMENT: INCREASED NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF PORT DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUING PROGRESS AT KHORRAMSHAHR, DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP OF KAHANI AND COMMITMENT TO SPEND 500 MILLION DOLLARS OVER NEXT FIFTEEN YEARS PERIOD HEARTENING EVIDENCE THAT GOVERNMENT AT LEAST BEGINNING TO CONCENTRATE ON PORT PROBLEMS. RUMORS IN BOTH BANDAR ABBAS AND KHORRAMAMSHAHR INDICATE THAT NAVY MAY TAKE OVER PRESENT PORT OF BANDAR ABBAS AND NEW PORT MAY BE BUILT A FEW MILES TO WEST OF PRESENT ONE. RUMORS TO MAKE SENSE AS NAVY NEED MORE ROOM IN BANDAR ABBAS AND THERE IS SPACE FOR A NEW COMMERCIAL PORT WHICH COULD CONNECT WITH TEHRAN-KERMAN-BANDAR ABBAS RAILWAY AND POSSIBLE NEW ROAD TO AFGHAN BORDER. HOWEVER FINAL DECISION ON NEW

PORT WILL AWAIT COMPLETION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN NEXT SIX MONTHS. IN MEANTIME AMERICAN COMPANIES SPECIALISING IN PORT CONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION SHOULD BE AWARE OF INVESTMENT AND TRADE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH MAY LIE AHEAD FOR THEM IN SOUTHERN IRAN.
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